

The Key to Social Justice



Kuan Chi Ian, Savina

What is social justice? It basically refers to the concept of reaching equality within groups of people who are deemed 'different' by society. They may be the victims of unfair treatment because of their race, belief, gender, sexual orientation or biological facts they cannot change.

Let's talk about the problem of health care first. With the help of technology, medicine has seen great advancement over the years, but not everyone can afford its high costs. The question is: are we taking care of the less privileged members of society? Research shows that negative health states are more prevalent in impoverished nations. Low income families cannot afford the expensive healthcare costs. Yet does that mean these people do not deserve the basic human dignity of being protected from infectious diseases just like the rest of us? The answer is obvious.

The crisis in Syria has drawn worldwide concern. Armed conflicts have been ongoing in Syria since 2011. Violent crackdowns on dissidents resulted in the situation quickly escalating into a civil war. Riots in the streets, violent protests and armed rebellions are causing deaths and injuries every day. The problem has been aggravated by the lack of adequate health care, and the picture we see is starvation and homelessness by the millions. "No one leaves home unless home is

the mouth of a shark; no one puts their children in a boat unless the water is safer than the land." Millions of Syrian refugees are now at the mercy of the governments they turned to, uncertain of their future.

Social justice is justice in terms of distribution of wealth, opportunities and privileges within a society. While Hong Kong's income disparity has risen to record high in recent years, Denmark continues to enjoy a narrower income gap than almost everywhere else. The country's second smallest wealth gap is surpassed only by the much smaller country of Slovenia. An important factor behind this equity is a system that helps laid-off employees re-enter job markets and makes re-training opportunities available to those in need.

The ultimate answer to income inequality is education. Nelson Mandela once said, "Poverty is not an accident. It's man-made and can be removed by the actions of human beings. Therefore, education is the strongest weapon that can be used to change the world." But the power of education goes above and beyond improving our survival conditions. It raises awareness of the social inequalities that many are still facing today. It provides a way out of the cycles of generational disadvantage that calls for the attention of all of us. Alone we can do little, but together, we can build a better world!